

## **WATCH AND SEE**

*Jeremiah 1:11-13, The word of the LORD came to me saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a rod of an almond tree." Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."*

Sometimes you have to be in just the right season for prophetic words to be fully understood. Jeremiah had two visions that spoke about things in his own life, ministry, and generation as well as to us living at the end of the age. These two visions have become more significant to me as the time of the end draws closer. The first image is that of an almond branch which was a sign of God watching over His word to bring His kingdom plans to pass. As you may know, the almond tree was called the watchman or the tree that hastens and gives us a prophetic glimpse of things to come.

John Trappe writes, "It has its name in Hebrew from "watching," because it watches, as it were, to bud and bear before other trees, even in the deep of winter, and when it is coldest. Hereby the prophet is animated, though young, and assured that he shall have the fruit of his early labors."

Dick Mills says this word for **watching** comes from the word for **hasten** or the word **ready**. *Jeremiah 1:12, "...for I am ready to perform My word."* **Watching, waking, hastening, anticipating; to be sleepless, alert, vigilant; on the lookout; to care for watchfully.** Compare that to *Romans 9:28, "For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth."* **Your God is saying to you; "Your prayer has been heard. I am intervening and responding to your petition. The answer is on its way. I am speeding up the answer, so get ready for a quick and sudden release of divine power in your situation."**

2023 was a year of fulfillment for Victory Church. We saw debt erased and the beginning of the restoration of our church facilities and it happened suddenly and completely. To me, this is a picture of the much more important work of building His building which is the body of Christ in these last days. Jesus is coming back my friend and we must share the good news with others and make ourselves ready. This 12 week study will help you get prepared for the days that lie ahead. What should you be doing? How should we spend our time, talents and treasure? You will find the answers to these questions and much more. Know this, when you are faithful to do your part you can **Watch and See** the Lord come in and do more than you can imagine in a moment of time. The Rewarder is coming to all that diligently seek Him. 2024 is going to be your best year yet!

Pastor Frank Bailey

## ***“WATCH AND SEE”***

Week One: In the Twinkling of an Eye

Week Two: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Week Three: The Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field

Week Four: The Parable of the Talents

Week Five: The Sheep and the Goats

Week Six: The Sower went out to Sow

Week Seven: The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Week Eight: The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Week Nine: When the Son of Man Comes,  
Will He Find Faith on this Earth?

Week Ten: He is a Rewarder, Six Crowns

Week Eleven: Heaven is a World of Love

Week Twelve: But Until Then....

***“ALL NOTES IN THE “WATCH AND SEE” LIFE GROUP SERIES ARE A COMPILATION  
OF THE WORKS OF PASTORS FRANK AND PARRIS BAILEY UNLESS NOTED  
OTHERWISE.”***

## *Week One*

### *In the Twinkling of an Eye*

#### *1 Corinthians 15:51-57*

*“51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

#### *Pastor’s Corner*

*“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, **and that He may send Jesus Christ**, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19-21*

The Lord promised that there would be seasons of renewal in preparation for His coming. It seems clear that the season just before His return could be characterized as **“the best of times and the worst of times.”** It is the worst of times because of the birth pangs of creation itself and the increase of demonic activity as the end of this age comes upon us. Of course it is the best of times because the Lord has saved His best wine for last. The days just before the Lord’s return promise to be filled with a great move of the Holy Spirit.

“...Peter spoke about two benefits of repenting and being converted. The first benefit being “times of refreshing” would come. This is one way of speaking about the baptism in the Spirit. The people can now experience the renewal or “refreshing” of their souls through the joys and the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result of their repentance, not only will their sin be forgiven and they will receive relief from their guilt, but they will also experience spiritual renewal through the Holy Spirit. The second benefit of turning from sin to Christ is the return of Jesus from heaven. But when He comes again, **(IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE)**, God will “restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.” Then will take place the fullness of renewal—the restoration of all things.” Life in the Spirit Commentary

The baptism in the Spirit evidenced by the heavenly language has fallen out of popularity in our new version of 21st Century modernism. Slick programs, short services, and cute cliché’s have replaced altar calls, speaking in other tongues, healing, and casting out demons. I think that is about to come to an abrupt end. Another generation is coming forward that has never seen a true time of refreshing from the Lord. The spiritual storm clouds have gathered on the horizon, the wind from another world has begun to blow, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are upon us.

## 1. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND BLESSINGS OF REPENTANCE AND BEING CONVERTED?

*“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19-21*

In these verses we see three benefits and blessings of repentance and being converted:

- Your sins will be blotted (canceled) out.
- Times of refreshing will come. We will receive seasons of **REVIVAL** from the Lord.
- Jesus Christ promises to \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven.

## 2. WHAT IS OUR BLESSED HOPE?

Our blessed hope is that Jesus will come again from heaven, (like He promised) and take us to the place where He is, the place He has prepared for us.

*“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and will take you to myself**, that where I am you may be also.” Jn. 14:1-3*

*“14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with **a SHOUT**, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17*

Concerning the word **SHOUT**- Lightfoot says, “the summons of all, both living and dead, to meet their Lord. C.F. Hogg says, “Only the voice of the Son of God can awaken them sleeping and change them living.”

## 3. HOW DO I KNOW I AM IF “IN CHRIST,” AND WILL BE CAUGHT UP TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR?

*“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” Rom. 8:16*

Pastor Frank writes, “Paul tells us that the only way to know if you are “in Christ” and will indeed be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, is that “***the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit.***” Pastor Frank writes, “What does that mean? Actually, Paul is describing the very essence of the assurance of our faith. It is not because we have followed a religious formula or even because we have repeated a certain prayer. We know we are His and therefore have an inheritance in heaven because of the reality of the Holy Spirit in our life. No one really knows but you. Have

you tasted the reality of God in your soul?" If so, then, "The Spirit of God will:

- \_\_\_\_\_ **YOU OF SIN**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **YOU OF THE REALITY OF CHRIST AND HIS CROSS**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **TO LIVE IN YOUR HEART**

***"Do you really know if today the Lord should return that you will be one of the ones that will rise to meet Him in the air? You need to answer the question for yourself, eternity lies in the balance."***

#### **4. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE HOUR HE WILL RETURN?**

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1 Corinthians 15:52-53*

Pastor Frank writes, "Do you ever think about the end of the world? Do you really think Jesus Christ will return physically to our world? What about during our lifetime, are the end of all things as we know them, at hand? I believe the end of all things is right at the door, the return of Christ is imminent, His kingdom reign on earth is certain." So the question is not **IF** He is coming back but **WHEN?** The Bible says no man knows the date, it says, that His return will happen suddenly, in the \_\_\_\_\_ of an \_\_\_\_\_."

#### ***HE IS COMING:***

- **IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE-** The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write "in an *atomos*," "in the twinkling of an eye." Jesus is coming in an atomic second. A second can be calibrated to a half second, a tenth of a second, a hundredth of a second, even a thousandth of a second. But an atomic second is a unit which is incapable of being further divided." Dick Mills SFLB

"That is incredible! The Lord will suddenly appear, literally in "an atomic instant." How should that affect our lives? First, it produces a joyful anticipation in our hearts knowing our reward is at hand. Secondly, it fills our hearts with an incredible sense of fear and awe, our incredible Lord Jesus will suddenly appear. I want to be ready for that moment, how about you?"

- **AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT** –see 2 Peter 3:10-13
- **ON AN ORDINARY DAY, WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT-** see Matt. 24:37-42

#### **5. WHAT MUST WE DO TO GET READY FOR THE DAYS AHEAD?**

"Are you ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? As Jesus said, "No man knows the day or the hour." Since His coming will be sudden and unexpected we have to stay ready. In our fast paced world there are many distractions and obstacles to our faith that can dull us spiritually and

cause us to be unprepared for His coming. Without spiritual sharpness it is easy for us to give in to the attitudes, beliefs, and spirit of the age. We have to stay vigilant so that the great day does not catch us unprepared. So go ahead and check yourself. The only way you really know that you are ready is if you have a joyful expectancy for His coming. So **“LOOK UP.”** the signs of His coming are everywhere, our redemption is at hand !

In 2 Tim. 3:1-5, Paul describes the increasing darkness of the last days. All around us today we see evidence of what Paul described. Many love themselves above others, the family unit is under siege, and we find an escalating lack of self-control throughout our culture. But perhaps the most frightening thing of all is the darkness experienced by those who have a form of godliness (outward appearance of religion) yet deny its power to change their lives. **Times indeed are growing more evil, and the world around us appears to be in total chaos.**

- **As believers, we must take care not to let all the noise of the chaos distract us from our preparations or for \_\_\_\_\_ for the trumpet call.**
- **“WATCH therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” Matthew 25:13**

***ANSWERS: 1. Return; 3. Convict, Convince, Come; 4. Twinkling of an Eye;  
5. Listening***

## **Week Two**

### ***The Parable of the Ten Virgins....Are you Ready?***

#### **Matthew 25:1-13**

*1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."*

#### ***Pastor's Corner***

***"Jesus is coming soon, ARE YOU READY?"*** The story of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 is just one of the many parables of Jesus' return. This heavenly story, along with the others, emphasize being prepared for His soon return. In this story 5 virgins were ready and 5 were not. To those who were not ready the most dreaded words of all were spoken to them, *"assuredly I say to you, I never knew you (vs.12)."* Let us then examine what being ready looks like according to the Bible. For we must all *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming (vs.13)."*

"The parable of the ten virgins gives us some interesting insight into what Jesus considered being prepared for His return would look like. The lesson of the story is plain, the oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit, and having oil in your lamps is obvious. We must stay full of God, that is the only way for us to be ready for the coming of the Lord. That is a powerful thought, it is the Spirit of God within us that actually qualifies us to be with Him. Many people just think about the work of the cross. The cross dealt with our sins, that is what blocked us from the Glory of His Presence. But just being forgiven is not enough. Forgiveness of our sins, the work of the cross was all about bringing us to God. That is what the day of Pentecost was all about. We have to go from the cross to the Upper Room and actually receive the Presence of God, the wonderful Holy Spirit, into our lives. When that happens, your new life begins, that is the beginning of having "oil in your lamp." But that is only the beginning, this oil, the Holy Spirit, is the source of power and life for all we are and all we do. We cannot live off of that initial experience, our lamps will run out. We need to have continual, daily fillings of the oil of His Spirit. This is how we stay ready, we must keep our lamps "trimmed and burning."

"Do you have any oil in your lamp today? Are you burning for the Lord? Learn the lesson of the wise and foolish virgins, be ready for the return of Christ, no one knows which day He will return."

## 1. IN THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS, WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM CAME UNEXPECTEDLY, WHO WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING?

*“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and **those who were ready** went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.” Matthew 25:10*

*And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**" ....'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' .... Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True .... and on His head were many crowns. ... He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. .... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.** Revelations 19:6-16*

## 2. WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VIRGINS THAT WERE READY AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT?

*“2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” Matt. 25:2-4*

They were both virgins, they both went out intending to meet the Bridegroom, but the difference lies in one being described as being *wise* and the other as *foolish*. The wise had made sure they had enough oil for the journey, the foolish did not. What must not be missed is that the virgins at some point had some oil. After coming back from trying to buy more, the door had already been shut. They knocked saying, *“Lord, Lord open to us but he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, \_\_\_\_\_.’” Matthew 25:11-12*

## 3. WHERE DO WE REPLENISH THE OIL IN OUR LAMPS?

*“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lamp stands I saw the One like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.” Rev. 1:12-13*

The Holy Spirit gives us Fresh Oil from heaven and it is available daily, through:

- \_\_\_\_\_ **with Him**
- The \_\_\_\_\_
- His \_\_\_\_\_

And one of the main places where we will find the oil flowing from heaven is in the \_\_\_\_\_ for the Bible says, He is walking amongst the lampstands (the church). “The **CHURCH (YOU)** are intended to be the light of the world. In order for the lampstand to shine it must have oil. We are to shine with the glory of God to our dark, sin engrossed, world, **WHEN THAT STOPS, HE REMOVES THE LAMPSTAND.** Our whole purpose as a church is to show forth the glory of His presence to the broken, lonely, and hurting of this world. When that stops, our reason to exist is gone. That was the point of the message Jesus declared in this vision. “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.



#### 4. WHAT MUST BE IN OUR LAMPS FOR THEM TO OPERATE PROPERLY?

*“He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.”  
John 5:35*

**THERE MUST BE OIL IN OUR LAMPS FOR THEM TO BURN AND SHINE.** This oil is the anointing of His Spirit. This oil in our lamps is mandatory for us to shine as lights in the middle of darkness.

Spurgeon writes, “The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright. Our churches are the Savior’s golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. **Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil (THE ANOINTING) from God the Holy Ghost.**”

“Today we don’t need more excellency of ministry and “good teaching”. We need oil in our lamps. We need pastors, churches and people who are not afraid or ashamed of the “oil”. Jesus is standing in the midst of His lampstands. The problem is not supply. The problem today is many of us have let our lamps run dry. Many have left their first love.

#### 5. WHAT IS ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BEING LUKEWARM?

*15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.  
16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” Rev. 3:15-16*

“Every time there is a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, there is a renewed expectancy of the Lord’s return. Why would that be? I think it is because that His return is of utmost importance to the Lord. He wants us to anxiously look forward to His return. In the same way, luke-warmness is characterized by an apathetic attitude about the return of Christ. How is your spiritual temperature? Is there a growing anticipation for the coming kingdom in your heart?.... The Lord is coming soon, His Spirit is being poured out on all flesh, it’s time for all of us to join together with the Holy Spirit in His final request, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

#### 6. WHAT MUST WE DO TO MAKE OURSELVES READY?

- **WAKEUP- Awake, Awake, Oh Sleeper**

*“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand.** Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” Romans 13:11*

*“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him.” Song of Solomon*

In the Song of Solomon she was being awakened by her lover. He had put His hand on the door and she was hesitating. It is the voice of the beloved, He is calling us to a deeper walk, a burning love and an igniting passion. We may not know the day or the hour but we can certainly continue “to make ourselves ready.”

- **SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE**

*“1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Col. 3:1-4*

It was written of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, the grandson of David- *“And he did evil, because **he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.**” 2 Chronicles 12:14*

- **BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*“ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Rom.8:11*

*“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:11-13*

*“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15*

*“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” Acts 2:4*

*“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:31*

*“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” Ephesians 5:18*

***In the original Greek, "be filled" means "keep on being filled \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.” “And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 13:52***

***ANSWERS: 2. I DO NOT KNOW YOU; 3. Communion, Word, Presence, Church; 5. Make Us Ready; 6. Constantly and Continually***

**Week Three**  
***The Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field***

**Matthew 13:44-46**

*44 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*

***Pastor’s Corner***

You can learn a lot about someone when you discover their treasure. Everyone has one; from the homeless man’s shopping cart to the rich man’s yacht, different things are precious to different people. You can evaluate a person’s spiritual condition by their value of the Lord. Jesus was talking about that in today’s verse, the treasure in this verse is God Himself. That is what Jesus came for, not to just purchase length of days for us in a place called heaven, He came to give us a new treasure that is too good for words. When He purchased us with His own blood He purchased access to Him for us. We now have access to an amazing relationship with the Lord Himself. God has become our treasure, He is the treasure hidden in a field. Jonathan Edwards often spoke about the Lord being “our good.” Here are some of his thoughts on our precious treasure:

“God Himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; He is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but God; He is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God, He is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the “river of the water of life” that runs, and the tree of life that grows, “in the “midst of the paradise of God” [Rev. 2:7]. The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast.”

So it’s not the golden streets, the pearly gates, length of days, or even a grand family reunion that is the primary focus of redemption. What Christ purchased at Calvary was our ability to have God as our very own treasure. He is our portion and our treasure, He is more than enough to satisfy all of our wants, He is our good.

## 1. WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE MAN WHO FOUND A TREASURE HIDDEN IN A FIELD?

Randy Alcorn writes in his book called the “Treasure Principle,” A poor man went walking one day and came upon a large field. On his journey his staff hit something in the ground. He begins to dig and dig and dig. To his surprise he unearths a box, a golden box, filled with ancient gold coins, diamonds and jewelry worth millions and millions of dollars. He hurries and buries it back in the sand and marks the spot. Some wealthy man must have died, dying with the secret of the treasure box. So he goes home to sell his farm, his crops, his tools, his prize oxen, everything that he has because he must buy the field. From that time forward *the traveler experiences a radical paradigm shift*. This parable serves as a vivid picture of **“the joy of surrendering lesser treasures for greater ones.”**

There is a treasure that meets our deepest poverty. The deep, dark cavern of our soul, it always wants, yet it is never full, we reach out and came up with empty, screamed but the cry never heard. This describes life *B.C.* “*Before Christ.*” Futile, empty and worthless.

Somehow all along Christ leads us to the greatest pearl of all, the one hidden in the field that was worth selling out for. Our deepest poverty met with His greatest treasure. I pray it doesn’t take a lifetime to find that which you already know.

Jesus spoke this amazing parable about how a man sells all he has because he has found the treasure of treasure. He is speaking of the kingdom of God. Have you too sold out to buy that one field? Life changes when Christ walks into the room. Now we leave family parties, rearrange our weekends for church, and say no to late night office parties. To most of us all the above was never really a sacrifice in light of the love, life, peace that we obtained through the love of God. But there is always a deeper sacrifice somewhere along the line.

***“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Jim Elliott***

John the Baptist in Luke 3:8 talked about **bearing the fruits of Repentance**. In the Amplified Bible it says it like this: “*Therefore produce fruit that is worthy of [and consistent with your] repentance [that is, live changed lives, turn from sin and seek God and His righteousness]*”. In response to this the people begin to ask him, “what shall we do?” John answered “give your clothes and food to the poor (vs.11).” To the tax collectors that came to be baptized and asked the same question, he answered, “don’t collect extra money that is not owed (vs.13).” And to the soldiers he said, “be content with your wages.” All three answers dealt with the way the people handled their money.

## 2. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES IN THE BIBLE DO WE SEE OF PEOPLE WHO EXHIBITED FRUITS OF REPENTANCE?

**One of the fruits of repentance is the way you value and spend your money will change.**

*Consider the following examples:*

- **ZACCHAEUS**- What did he do after he gave his heart to Jesus? See Luke 19:8

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His radical new approach to money proved that his heart had been **Transformed!**

- **JERUSALEM CONVERTS**- What did they do after being converted and receiving the Holy Spirit? See Acts 2:45 and Acts 4:32-35

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- **EPHESIAN OCCULTIST**- What did they do to their books? How much were they worth? See Acts 19:10

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- **WIDOW'S MITE**- How much did she give? See Mark 12:44

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- **RICH MAN**- He wanted to build bigger barns, to store up so he could retire, relax and take life easy. What happened and what did the Lord call him? See Luke 12:16-21

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He was rich towards himself, not towards God.

- **RICH YOUNG RULER**- What did the Lord tell him to do, and why couldn't he do it? See Matthew 19:16-22

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**The Rich Young Ruler wasn't willing to give up everything, but our traveler in the field was. Do you feel sorry for the traveler???**

- "If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that will never stop paying dividends."
- "Whatever treasure is stored up on Earth will be left behind when we leave."
- "Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive."

*19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21*

- “The traveler made a short term sacrifice to obtain a long term reward.”
- “It cost him everything he owned- but gained him everything that mattered.”
- “In **JOY** the man wasn’t exchanging lesser treasures for greater treasures out of **DUTIFUL DRUDGERY** but out of **JOYFUL EXHILARATION!!!**”
- “You can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead!”
- “Anything we try to hang onto here will be lost, but anything we put into God’s hands will be ours for eternity.”

*(The above quotes were taken and revised from the book  
“The Treasure Principle”- Randy Alcorn)*

**Jesus is the treasure hidden in the field. He is the pearl of Great Price!**

**“Gaze upon Him long enough and you’ll become a Giver.”**

### **The Joyous Paradox**

**DIE TO LIVE  
 MOURN TO REJOICE  
 IMPOVERISHED TO ABOUND  
 BOWED DOWN TO BE RAISED UP  
 LOSE TO GAIN  
 GIVE TO RECEIVE**

These are all part of the same truth. Whatever we give to God, He will return to us many times over, both for His glory and our good. God offers us His greatest gift Himself. With Him comes a life of joy and purpose. **We were made for a person and a place. Jesus is the person. Heaven is the place.** But we’re not yet home in heaven.

*Why the wait?*

Because God has work for us to do on the Earth, work for which He empowers us- the work of giving away our lives, including our wealth for the sake of the needy and the glory of God. We must learn what it means to invest in eternity- to **LIVE** and **GIVE** now that will pay off for eternity.

*( “The Treasure Principle Bible Study”- Brian Smith and Randy Alcorn)*

## **Week Four**

### **The Parable of the Talents**

#### **Read Matthew 25:14-29**

14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away

#### **Pastor's Corner**

*"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says the Lord of hosts.* Haggai 2:8 "Most Christians say they believe that there really is a life, a real life beyond the grave. For many, it may just be a belief and not something that is really real to them. What do I mean by that? What I mean is that most people make all their plans for their life based on these few short years that we will live on this earth. Everything is aimed at being successful and having a good life here and now. But, if eternity is real, then most of us have our priorities way out of line. Most are using their resources and their talents in an unbalanced way if there really is a heaven, if there really is a millennial reign of Christ.... Don't get me wrong, just being in the kingdom will be awesome. Everyone who comes to God by grace through faith will have an awesome eternal existence, but there will be different degrees and levels of blessing and rewards in His kingdom.

So how will the Christian be judged in the kingdom? Of course our sinful past is gone, permanently dealt with by Christ on the cross. What will be evaluated will be our **stewardship**, how we lived our lives and used our resources (that we have been given) in regard to His kingdom. Did we use our God given skills only for this life now or did I invest my life in the Kingdom of God. It matters not whether you have been given much or given little. What matters is that whatever you have been given, has been and is being yielded into the Master's hands. Kathryn Kuhlman once said, "The Heavenly Father does not ask for golden vessels. He does not ask for silver vessels. God asks for yielded vessels – those who will submit their will to the will of the Father."

## 1. WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS?

**STEWARDSHIP.** In this parable, a man with a great amount of goods and wealth entrusted them into the hands of his servants. The “talents” (**specifically a word meaning money-finances**) were the owner’s money. The servants were just “stewards” of the goods and resources that they were entrusted to manage while the owner was away from His estate.

### **STEWARD:** (STRONGS NT 3623)

**οἰκονόμος, the manager of a household or of household affairs; especially a steward, manager, superintendent** (whether free-born, or, as was usually the case, a freed-man or slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age:

- Manages assets for the owners benefit.
- The steward carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he manages.
- His job is to find out what the owner wants done with the assets and then carry out the owner’s will. (The Treasure Principle- Randy Alcorn)

## 2. WHAT MUST WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT STEWARDSHIP?

To understand what stewardship means you must know that as our \_\_\_\_\_ God is our \_\_\_\_\_, and has complete rights and authority over our lives and all that we have in possessions. Matthew Henry says, **“HE OWNS US, HE MADE US, AND HIS WE ARE!” He created me, He purchased me, He owns my house, He owns my car, He owns me. We are totally owned by God. If you are owned by Him then He has your best interest at heart!”** (FB)

- *“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” Psalm 24:1*
- *“The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, ’ says the Lord of hosts.” Haggai 2:8*
- *“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” Deut. 8:18*
- *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corn. 6:19-20*

As a **“Steward”** of God we recognize that He is the owner of all that has been placed in our hands, and that **“I am only managing what belongs to Him”**. He is the **LORD** (owner) over the house. When this truth gets buried in our souls, we come to realize that we don’t own possessions, we don’t own our children, our spouse, our health, our ministry, our money etc. **ALL** have been lent or entrusted into our hands.



The ultimate question, then, is this: Am I the “LORD” of my life, or is Christ “THE LORD” of my life? Stewardship is our obedience to God, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*David said, “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You.” 1 Chronicles 29:14*

**“We will be throughout eternity discovering the mystery of the Church, His Bride. All of our gifts, education, talents, abilities, and make up, God will use them for His honor and glory. As we look and live upward, He in turn gives us an ever increasing fountain as we say continually, “our sufficiency is from Him.” (2 Corn. 3:5.)**

### **3. WHY DOES THE LORD REQUIRE US TO GIVE A PORTION OF OUR INCOME INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

*“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” Matt.6:24*

The Lord is in need of nothing! He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. “But I have come to the conclusion that our “\_\_\_\_\_” is after our heart and trust. He goes at it in very diverse, sometimes seemingly random ways, but it is our affection that He is after. When we understand this, we understand why idolatry is such a serious offense to God. God is passionate about His Glory and wants a people who value Him and the Glory of His presence....**So if you have been struggling with the tithe and the offerings remember this, He is after your love. Once He has it, provision from the Lord is guaranteed.**

### **4. WHAT ARE OUR TITHES AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF?**

*“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first-fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.” Proverbs 3:9-10*

“Christ (the High Priest) gives us the blessing, we give Him the tithes. **The tithes to God are an acknowledgement of His right to all.** Our High Priest has a right to the surrender of all we have, as belonging to Him, to the willing sacrifice of all He asks or needs for His service. The connection between the tithes and the blessing is closer than we know. The more unreservedly we place all that we have at His disposal, the more we in very deed forsake all for His sake, the richer will our experience be of the fullness and the power which our High Priest can bless.” A. Murray

### **5. WHAT SECRET DID THE 5 AND 2 TALENT GUY’S LEARN?**

They learned the secret to entering into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord. They took what was placed in their hands - talents (money- specifically) and multiplied it for their Master’s kingdom. In return He was pleased, and they were given more. And so it is when we take what has been entrusted into our hands and we sow it into the kingdom. The funny thing is He then does the work and multiplies it, and we are invited to enter into the Joy of the Lord.

***“Where do we spend our resources? Do we care enough about the work of God to invest significant funds into God’s work? The Lord actually will gift certain people with the ability to generate finances in powerful ways. When these individuals have***

*their minds renewed and actually fall in love with the work of God, they can be powerful instruments to advance God's kingdom. They can be God's channel to finance missionaries, churches, Christian rehabs, and a multitude of other powerful ministries. Who knows, maybe God will use YOU to advance His kingdom with financial resources."*

#### **6. THE 3 SERVANTS WENT THROUGH AN EVALUATION. WILL WE GO THROUGH AN EVALUATION OF WHAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO US?**

*10 "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:10-12*

All of us tend to focus on what we have or what we don't have (our talents and our resources) but the Lord focuses on our yielded heart. When He returns He will only require of you what He has given you. He will ask, what did you do with what I placed in your hands? On that Great and Terrible day YOU will have to give an account. If you have learned to give what you have been giving for His kingdom and His glory, you will be in good shape. So start today, yield your heart, your talents, your resources and watch as He blesses you more than you can imagine, not only in the eternal life to come but here and now as well.

#### **7. WHY DID THE 3<sup>RD</sup> GUY HIDE HIS TALENT?**

Because He had a wrong perception of the Master. He thought the master was mean and cruel, when in reality He was giving and wanted to bestow even more upon His servants. Unfortunately this man never found out what the "place of joy" was for him in this life or in the life to come.

#### **8. IF WE HOLD ONTO OUR LITTLE, WHAT ARE WE IN DANGER OF LOSING?**

*"It is possible to give away (release) and become richer! It is also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything..." Proverbs 11:24*

Like in the Parable of the Talents we all have been entrusted with resources. Some have been given more than others. Sometimes, we hold on to the little that we have in \_\_\_\_\_ of losing it. We like the last man in the parable, hold onto and even hide our "talents" resources – money. Usually when we do that we put ourselves in danger of losing everything... Instead we must follow the example of the other two men in the parable. They took what they had and invested it and before long they were able to double what they had.

**ANSWERS: 2. Creator, Owner; 3. Jealous God; 5. Joy; 8. Fear**

*Week Five*  
*The Sheep and the Goats*  
*Read Matthew 25:31-46*

***Pastor's Corner***

This week's lesson is on when the Son of Man comes again to judge the nations. This is really not a parable but rather a prophecy of what is to come. Matthew 25:31-46 tells us of that great and terrible day, when His sheep will be set on His right side and the goats on His left. The sheep are His saints which will inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundations of the world. The goats are the wicked which will go away to an everlasting punishment. The picture painted here is a judicial scene. Where the judge sits and evidence is brought forth proving whether one was a sheep or a goat. In this passage we see His criteria:

**“I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” Matthew 25:35-36**

But as you read this you may say, how can I give when I have so little in my hands. We must get our eyes off of what we don't have and instead **LOOK UP** to the One who has an Infinite Supply. Consider the little boy with the lunch in the story of the Feeding of the Multitudes. “The disciples were struggling to find food when they came across a little boy who had a small lunch. How could anybody expect the child to give his offering of bread and fish, after all this was all he had. But what he and the disciples would soon discover was that when you choose to give what you have to others, not only will they be blessed, but you and your household will be blessed as well. And as you do that over and over again you will find yourself tapping into the **INFINITE SUPPLY** of the Lord. And as an added benefit the blessings that you will receive will not stop in this age but will continue in the age to come. The little boy gave, and he and all the people ate and ate until they could not eat no more. Spurgeon says, the people “had received to their utmost capacity, and yet there was yet more to follow.... when they had all eaten to the full, great baskets were brought, and these were filled; in the one case twelve, and in the other seven of them. There is enough for each, enough for all, and still remaining for future needs.”

“That is the amazing truth about God's supply; enough for each, enough for all, and still ample supply for future needs. I am trying to let this soak into my head, He is and has more than enough for each of us in every circumstance. He is and has more than enough for all of our future needs. Now I get it, that's why the children of Israel in the wilderness were only allowed to gather enough manna for that day. God is a continual flowing fountain of provision. We are being taught to depend on Him everyday. There is sufficient grace available, there is infinite grace available, we are to drink it in each day. So what kind of challenge are you facing today? Is it bigger than infinite? Take whatever you have, put it in the hand of the Lord, stand back and watch the Infinite One display His glory.

## 1. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE LORD JESUS COMES IN ALL OF HIS GLORY?

*“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:31-32*

The Pulpit Commentary says, "All the nations" as meaning the whole race of men, who, dead and living, small and great, Jew and Gentile, shall stand before God to be judged according to their works. (Rev. 20:11-13), Matthew Henry writes, "There is a \_\_\_\_\_ to come, in which every man shall be sentenced to a state of everlasting happiness, or misery.... The wicked and godly here dwell together, in the same cities, churches, families, and are not always to be known the one from the other....and death takes both: but in that day they will be parted forever. Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd; He will shortly distinguish between those that are His, and those that are not."

## 2. WHICH WORKS WILL THE JUDGE SEE AS EVIDENCE OF THE WORK OF GRACE IN ONE'S HEART?

*“I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me” Matthew 26:35-36*

“Good works done for God's sake, through Jesus Christ, are here noticed as marking the character of believers made holy by the Spirit of Christ, and as the effects of grace bestowed on those who do them. The wicked in this world were often called to come to Christ... but they turned from His calls... Condemned sinners will in vain offer excuses. The punishment of the wicked will be an \_\_\_\_\_ punishment; their state cannot be altered. **Thus life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before us, that we may choose our way, and as our way so shall our end be.**” Matthew Henry

## 3. CAN WE GAIN HIS FAVOR BY OUR GOOD WORKS?

You cannot earn or buy His favor or salvation by good works, but let us not forget His word says, ***“faith without works is dead”*** (James 2:17) Our giving and helping others, will not only be advantageous in the life to come but in this life now as well.” *Consider Isaiah 58:6-9*

*“Is this not the fast that I have chosen:  
To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the heavy burdens,  
To let the oppressed go free,  
And that you break every yoke?*

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;  
When you see the naked, that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?*

*Then your light shall break forth like the morning,  
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,  
And your righteousness shall go before you;  
The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.*

*Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' Isaiah 58:6-9*

In our **FASTING**, John Piper writes, “it is not merely to deny ourselves but to supply the needs of others.... **(SO IN FASTING WE GIVE UP SOMETHING IN ORDER TO GIVE IT TO ANOTHER- WHAT A REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT)** We are not responsible for what we cannot do, but for what we can do....The Good Samaritan did not say, “One interrupted day will make very little difference in the problem of chronic violence in this region.” He saw the one need and did something....We tend to want to seal ourselves off of all trouble and misery. Out of sight, out of mind- and out of mind usually means, \_\_\_\_\_...One can be callous anywhere. And one can do great good from afar.” But the Lord’s way is, “don’t hide from your fellow humans who are in need.”

#### **4. WHO ARE THE POOR?**

A person who would be described as poor, is not just a person of no financial means, a poor individual is “**one who cannot help themselves...**”

***“ He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.”***  
***Proverbs 19:17***

**Pity**= Gracious consideration, to stoop down in kindness... Being generous

**POOR**= Dangling, helpless, weak, hanging on for dear life.

**Lends**= Entangled, connected, joined together

**Pay Back**= establish His covenant of peace, to mend the broken parts.  
(Word study by Pastor Frank Bailey)

Martin Luther writes: “He that cometh to Me shall be so furnished with the Holy Ghost, that he shall not only be quickened and refreshed himself and delivered from thirst, but he shall also be a strong stone vessel, from which the Holy Ghost in all His gifts shall flow to others, ***refreshing, comforting, and strengthening*** them, even as he was ***refreshed*** by Me.” (John Vol. 2 J.C. Ryle)

#### **5. WHAT ARE THE REWARDS IN THIS LIFE CAN WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE AS A RESULT A LIFESTYLE OF GIVING?**

***Then*** your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. ***Then*** you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ***'Here I am.... Then*** your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday....

*The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones;  
You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those  
from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many  
generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,  
The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. Isaiah 58:8-12*

## 6. HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE A SHEEP?

**According to John 10:1-5**, As far as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, it is not a question of **IF** this is going to happen or even **WHEN** (in the prophetic time clock) it will happen, the real question is **Are You a SHEEP or a GOAT? Read John 10:1-5 and fill in the blanks.**

1. The sheep \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 3
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ His sheep by \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 3
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ them \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 3
4. He goes \_\_\_\_\_ them. Vs. 3
5. The sheep \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Vs. 4
6. The sheep \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 4
7. The sheep do not \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 5

## 7. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A SHEEP? Read Psalm 23 and fill in the blanks.

1. The Lord is \_\_\_\_\_ Shepherd, \_\_\_\_\_!!!!. Vs.1
2. He makes me to lie down and rest and leads me. Vs. 2
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ my soul. Vs. 3
4. He leads me in the paths of righteousness, for His name sake and my benefit. Vs. 3
5. When I walking through a death experience, I will not fear. Why? Because He is \_\_\_\_\_. Vs. 4
6. Your Rod and Staff comfort me. Vs. 4
7. You've got all my \_\_\_\_\_ taken care of. Vs. 5
8. Your \_\_\_\_\_ comes upon my head. Vs. 5
9. My cup always \_\_\_\_\_. It never runs dry. Vs. 5
10. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are chasing after me and will be for the rest of my life. Vs. 6
11. I get to \_\_\_\_\_ in the house of the Lord forever... Vs. 6

***JUST TOO GOOD NOT TO READ.....***

## ***“I SHALL NOT WANT”***

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Psalm 23:1*

Is this promise literally true? Is it possible to live a life completely and totally satisfied? Is it possible to ever say I am totally and completely satisfied. I have no want? This is apparently the very heart of the message of Jesus. He wasn't promising earthly kingdoms. He wasn't that kind of king. Jesus said on several occasions and in several ways that there was a place of total contentment found in Him. To the woman at the well He said that He had water to drink that would finally quench the thirst of her soul. To the enquirers after He fed the 5000, He said He was the bread that came down from heaven. He continued to say if you ate that bread, your hunger for life and purpose would be satisfied. Apparently, the key to this kind of completeness is contained within this call to intimacy. Christ Himself is the food that satisfies our souls. He is the Good Shepherd, when we come to Him all our wants are swallowed up. Here are some thoughts from Jonathan Edwards:

“The river that supplies the city of God, is a full and never-failing stream: there is enough, and it never is dry. And they that trust in God, and whose hope the Lord is, they shall be like trees “planted by the waters that spreadeth forth her roots, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, nor shall cease from yielding fruit”. God has promised that he will never fail them, nor forsake them. The people that has God amongst them, they have the fountain of all good in the midst of them. There is a full fountain, indeed an inexhaustible and infinite fountain, enough for the supply of everyone, under all their circumstances and necessities: whatever anyone wants, he may go to this fountain, and there he may have a supply. Such a people that have this God amongst them, may glory in him, and say, “The Lord is our shepherd we shall not want”.

Have you found that place where every want is finally gone? There is only One who can do that, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. Maybe your heart is full of wants today. If so, come to the green pasture, that special place next to the still waters. Lay down under the care of the Shepherd, soon you will be singing David's song of satisfaction for yourself.

***ANSWERS: 1. Judgment; 2. Everlasting; 3. Out of Heart***

*Week Six*  
*The Sower went out to Sow*

*Read Matthew 13:1-9;18-23*

*Pastor's Corner*

In Matthew 13 it speaks of 7 parables about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The parable of the Sower in particular tells of the benefits of sowing good seed into good soil and the danger of letting the enemy infiltrate your land. Seed sown into good soil will produce a harvest that will remain not just in this life but in the life to come. Isaac was a man who knew the secret of being blessed. The Bible says, that *“Isaac sowed in the land, and received in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.”* Genesis 26:12 We can learn a lot from his example on how not to let the enemy block our blessing... You can read his story in Genesis 26:12-25.

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “It takes a lot of effort to avoid contention. Driving a car, working with people, dealing with your children all can create a toxic atmosphere of contention and stress if you allow it. Isaac learned how to prosper in a time of not only famine but surrounded by Philistines. In the Revival Bible it says the meaning of “Philistine” is rooted in the words that mean to “roll or wallow in self.” In fact the Philistines stopped up all of Abraham’s wells. Selfish people will always try to hinder revival and growth in other people’s lives. If we don’t watch out we too will find ourselves stopping up other people’s wells with our own sordid “pollutants” that we have accumulated. But Isaac went a different way in Gen.24:62 it says, “Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi” which means, “The Well of the Living One.” When we learn to drink by the well of the living one we will realize that contention/strife is in the very air we breathe. Everyday we will have to learn to clean out not only our personal well by worship and reading of His word, but we will find ourselves in the business of digging out other people’s issues. Our souls are revived when we learn to live in the atmosphere of digging!

**Jeremiah 2:13 says, “For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns broken cisterns that can hold no water.” Isaac found his purpose, it was by that well of the living one and after that no one could stop him up. He not only learned to value his foundation from his father’s faith by unstopping his father’s wells, he also learned that when the world’s economic system fails he can live on the grace of God. In fact every time he faced contention with the Philistines, he kept moving on until the Lord made room for them both.**

How do you respond when your back is up against the wall? Many times I find myself “rolling or wallowing in self” but when I begin to re-dig or stir up all that God has done in my life I find expansion. It’s the well of the living one that bids us to “come and drink” everyday. That day at the feast Jesus saw thousands of Jewish people drinking from all the man made cisterns, especially the religious ones. After Isaac became the well digger, The Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not fear, for I am with you, I will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham’s sake.” Prosperity, spiritual breakthrough and purpose to our lives comes to those who abide by the true rivers. Come and Drink!



## 1. IN MATTHEW 13:1-12 WHAT IS THE SEED A TYPE OF ?

The seed is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ that is sown upon men's hearts. Some fell on:

- **ALONG THE WAYSIDE**- immediately the word is snatched away by the enemy
- **STONY GROUND**- no root, so tribulation and persecution causes him to stumble
- **AMONG THORNS**- cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches causes him to be unfruitful
- **GOOD SOIL**- bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

## 2. WHAT CAN WE DO IF OUR HEARTS ARE HARD?

*"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12*

*"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." Isaiah 44:3*

*"You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it; I, the LORD, have created it." Isaiah 45:8*

## 3. HOW IS THE SEED ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN OUR HEARTS?

*Eph. 3:17 "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love"*

Romans 5:5 says, "the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts." This love is actually a person, the blessed \_\_\_\_\_. The scriptures say that God is love. Just as Jesus is the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is the love of God. His love is life changing. In Eph. 3, Paul is describing the vital life of a Christian. Just as Jesus spoke of abiding in the vine, Paul talks about letting our roots go deep down into the love of God. He is describing experiential Christianity, the kind that sustains us in this dangerous and difficult world."

## 4. WHAT TWO WAYS CAN WE BECOME ROOTED IN THE LOVE OF GOD?

- ***DAILY FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT***

"This enables this "root system" to be developed in our lives. For me, praying with my \_\_\_\_\_ and worship is how I can become "rooted". As I worship Him, or pray in the Spirit, I become aware of the presence of God. This manifest presence is the anointing. This is actually the atmosphere we were intended to live in which we lost at the fall of man. As this anointing increases in us and upon us, our roots are going down deep into the Lord.

This is where perseverance, patience, and endurance are developed in our lives. The storms of life may blow but we are rooted deep into the love of God.

***“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” 2 Cor. 9:15***

- ***DELIGHTING IN THE WORD OF GOD***

*“Blessed is the man  
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.  
He shall be like a tree  
Planted by the rivers of water;*

*That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.  
The ungodly are not so,*

*But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.  
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.  
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Psalm 1:1-6*

He shall bring forth fruit in its season. The Bible says that He wants to produce fruit that will remain in this life and in the life to come. This is the way you will be able to stand in the judgment. As for our part, we must take the seed that we have been given, whether it is the Word, or finances, or gifts and we must begin to sow it into the kingdom of God. When we do so, we will begin to reap 30, 60 or 100 fold. We will also find that even though the enemy wants to keep clogging up our wells, the Lord will see to it that we will find our place and that our gifts will make room for us and bring us before great men. (see Genesis 26:22; Proverbs 18:16)

## **6. WHO SUPPLIES THE SEED TO THE SOWER?**

*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” 10 **Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown** and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.” 2 Cor.9:6-11*

If we want to be prosperous we must learn the secret of multiplying your seed... The more you

plant, and the more you scatter, the more harvest you will experience. The Bible says, “*Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.*” *Eccl. 11:1* Take the word that has been planted in your heart and the provision that God has placed in your hand and begin to sow into good soil. And know this, *“that God will not be mocked for whatever a man soweth so shall he reap...”* Maybe you will be like Isaac and reap a hundredfold. But regardless, if it's 30, 60 or a 100 fold, blessed you shall be.

## **7. WHAT TWO WAYS DOES THE BIBLE SAY THAT THE LORD WILL “SUPPLY” YOU WITH WHAT YOU NEED?**

- ***HE SUPPLIES YOU WITH THE SPIRIT AND MATERIALLY***

*Gal. 3:5 “Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith”*

This is a beautiful verse of scripture describing the abundant and continual nature of the provision of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Paul is describing a continual flow of the Spirit that is poured out on thirsty Christians. Too often we tend to be dependent on past infusions of the Spirit in our life while there is a continuous, outpouring of His Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ for us. Let's face it, we have challenges, needs, temptations, and decisions that are frankly too big for us on a daily basis. The good news is that we don't have to soldier on in our own strength, He is daily supplying the Spirit to us. His supply is more than sufficient for every dilemma.

Dick Mills writes: “**The word suggests an abundant supply, both materially and spiritually.** So we could translate this phrase: “...He who lavishes the Spirit on you...,” or”...the One Who is constantly supplying the Spirit to you in bountiful measure...” Paul is not writing to these people of one single isolated incident of God's provision in their lives. Rather, he is referring to a continuous flood tide of answered prayers, miracles, healing, and deliverances.”

His supply is both abundant and continual. So before you charge out into the minefield of life today, sit down and have a good long drink of the Spirit. He is supplying the Spirit lavishly and continually in your life. There is plenty not only to satisfy your thirst, but empowerment and enlightenment for every challenge.

Charles Spurgeon writes, “But, yours are everlasting treasures; yours are solid riches. When the son of eternity shall have melted the rich man's gold away, yours shall endure. A rich man has a *cistern* full of riches, but a poor saint has got a *fountain* of mercy, and he is the richest who has a fountain. Now, if my neighbor be a rich man, he may have as much wealth as ever he pleases, it is only a cistern full, it will soon be exhausted; but a Christian has a fountain that ever flows, and let him draw, draw on forever, the fountain will still keep on flowing. “Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.”

That is how my God deals with me; he gives to the rich man all at once, but to me day by day.” Ah, Egypt, thou were rich when thy granaries were full, but those granaries might be emptied; Israel was far richer when they could not see their granaries, but only saw the manna drop from heaven, day by day. Now, Christian, that is thy portion—the portion of the fountain always flowing, and not of the cistern-full, and soon to be emptied.”

**BIBLE WORD CAPSULES –By Evangelist Dick Mills**

*“The Lord shall supply all our needs according to His riches in Glory.”  
Philippians 4:19*

**SUPPLY**- A Greek word “pleroo”, pronounced “play-rah’oh”

**LEXICONS:**

**STRONGS**- Copiousness- cram a net- make replete- fill up a hollow

**YOUNGS**- To make full

**BAGSTER**- Fill up a deficiency

**LIDELL SCOTT**- Satiated

**ABOTT-SMITH**- Fill to the full

**CREMER**- Have enough; be fully satisfied

**R. BERRY**- Bestow abundantly

**EX. GREEK. N.T.**- In a lavish, magnificent way

**THAYER**- Cause to abound

**ALFORD**- Fully supply

**HORT**- Supply liberally

**SOPHOCLES**- Fill your hand

**TRANSLATIONS:**

**MONTGOMERY**- Fully supply

**BECK**- Give you all you need

**WUEST**- Satisfy to the full

**DARBY**- Abundantly supply

**WAY**- Shall fill up the measure of all your need

**BRUCE**- Will fully meet every need of yours

**WILLIAMS**- Amply Supply

**WORRELL’S**- Liberally supply

**GOODSPEED**- Gloriously supply

**20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**- Fully satisfy

***ANSWERS: 1. Word of God; 3. Holy Spirit; 4. Heavenly Language; 7. Available***

**Week Seven**  
**The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares**

*Read Matthew 13: 24-30;36-43*

**Pastor's Corner**

*"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" 2 Timothy 3:1-4*

We are obviously experiencing a melt down in our society. Our Christian, Protestant heritage in our country has been eroded in our lifetime. We would never imagine the horrors that have crept in among us. School shootings, church shootings, shootings in movie theaters, malls and on the streets of America seemed to happen daily. Court rulings that defy the very definition of marriage, babies being murdered, gender issues...It seems as though we have been launched into a new level of insanity. Perilous times have come. Paul's prophecy is being fulfilled. Here are a couple of word definitions on the word "perilous."

Vincent: **PERILOUS TIMES**-literally **hard times-** denotes a definite, specific season.

Thayer spoke of the difficulty in facing and surviving perilous times. Thayer's definition for Perilous Times- **Hard to do, to take, to approach, Hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous**

Matthew Henry writes of these problems and what they stem from. He says, "Men love their carnal selves better than their spiritual selves....Instead of Christian charity, which takes care for the good of others, they will mind themselves only, and prefer their own gratification before the church's edification."

For us who are living in these dark times the opportunities are all around us. When these difficult seasons are pummeling the world, the lost have nothing left to put their confidence in. There is nowhere to hide, even the movie theaters are dangerous. Today, during these prophesied perilous times, it is our time to present Christ to a traumatized world. As Jesus predicted, men's hearts would be failing them for fear. For the Christian we have a shelter to run to in these dark days. The Lord is our defense and rather than hiding away in fear, we stand in confidence, presenting Christ to the world. Timothy lived in perilous times. Church members were being arrested and killed as he pastored the church in Ephesus. Paul told him to stir up the gift of God that he had received through the laying on of hands. He also said, God had not given him a spirit of fear but of love, power, and a sound mind. It is in times like we are living in that we discover who we are and what we believe. Darkness is covering the earth but the light of the gospel pierces the darkness.

## 1. WHO ARE WE TO BEWARE OF IN THE LAST OF DAYS?

*“And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:11-14*  
*Matt.24:11-14*

*“ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.”*  
*Matthew 24:23-25*

*“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived”*  
*2 Tim. 3:3*

*“So that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.” Phil. 1:10*

***“Let’s face it, there are evil people in the world. Some we know are evil men and others who pretend to be good and who are not. We must ask God to give us a spirit of discernment on who to trust and who to stay away from. Not everyone who says, “\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_” is truly a man or woman of God. Before you listen to, follow or support someone it would benefit you to find out what they believe and if what they say they believe, they actually live out in their daily lives. For starters steer completely clear of anyone who has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof.”***

### ***STAY CLEAR FROM THE FOLLOWING:***

lovers of themselves, lovers of money  
boasters, proud  
blasphemers, disobedient to parents,  
unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving,  
brutal, despisers of good, traitors, slanders  
headstrong, haughty, without self-control  
lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,  
having a form of godliness but denying its power.  
From such people turn away! 2 Timothy 3:1-4

## 2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING THE POWER?

*“having a form of godliness but denying its power, from such people turn away!” 2Tim.2:1,2,5*

“Do you think Paul would be comfortable in the seeker friendly atmosphere of today’s “relevant church” movement? Throughout history, church leaders have tried to “protect” people from the supernatural element of Christianity. The trend has always been to stay current with society so the crowds will be welcome. In the 1940’s and 1950’s it was

called “modernism”. In the 1990’s it was called “seeker sensitive”, today it is called “\_\_\_\_\_”. I think Paul would call it a **“form of godliness without the power of God.”** What separates Christianity from the other religions of the world is not our programs, slogans, or our professional presentations. What separates us is the power of God that is related to the message of the cross and the power of Pentecost. Nothing that man can generate can ever replace the power of God related to our message and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit....Our basic need is an encounter with the Living God.”

### **3. HOW CAN YOU STAY VIGILANT WITH ENEMIES ALL AROUND YOU?**

- **STUDY YOUR BIBLE!**

The better you know your Bible, meditate on it, and let His words sink into your spirit, the better you will be able to withstand the wiles of the devil. See 2 Tim. 3:16-17

- **THE SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT!**

Never trust any preacher or teacher who does not believe that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and was God in the flesh. See John 1:1,14 That Jesus died for our sins, rose from the grave and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to bring us to our home in heaven.

- **SEEK GOD’S WILL, TRUST HIM AND HE WILL DIRECT YOU!**

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6*

- **SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY WITH OTHERS!**

*“My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone. O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.” Psalm 71:15-18*

- **STOP LIVING IN IMMORLITY!**

*“and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13*

- **WALK IN THE SPIRIT!**

*“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16*

### ***LOOK TO HIM WHO IS ABLE***

*“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” Jude 1:24*

“How refreshing to know that Christ is watching over His word in my life. My job is to reach out and grab His reigns. The Christian life is not a self improvement course but totally a supernatural life that never ends. If we have God’s help, the stumbling-stone will no more be a stumbling-stone, but a stepping-stone to something higher and better. For every temptation overcome brings strength to overcome the next challenge. When Christ prayed in the gospel of John he wasn’t praying for “those in the world” but the ones He chose. By the grace of God we responded to His voice and by the grace of God He will lead us home. Not only does He promise to keep us but to present us as the bride of Christ! Wow! Let your spirit be opened to this precious Gospel. It’s a win, win!”

#### **4. ARE THERE MORE POSITIVE SIGNS OF THE END OF THIS AGE?**

*“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” Rom. 8:22-23*

“When you think of the last days, what is the first thing that comes into your mind? Is it the earthquakes, pestilences, and the rumors of war? Maybe it’s the hearts failing for fear, or people becoming lovers of themselves, lovers of money, or disobedience to parents. Surely those are signs of the end of all things as we know them. But are there other signs, more positive signs of the end of this age? I think the greatest Biblical sign of the last days has been overlooked by much of the church. The greatest sign in the book of Acts that assured the disciples that the time of the end had begun was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit. For Peter, the coming of the Spirit sealed the deal. He was sure that “this was that” and the words of the prophets were beginning to be fulfilled right before his eyes.”

“I believe we have entered into a specific time in history where the outpourings of the Spirit will increase in frequency and in intensity. If we do live in perilous times, if people’s hearts are callous and hardened toward spiritual things, then an outpouring of the Spirit is essential to complete the work necessary for the return of The Lord Jesus Christ. There have been very distinct seasons of outpouring since those early days of the church. Just when it seems the church has fallen asleep and is no longer relevant to modern man, suddenly the Holy Spirit comes again. I have a feeling He has saved the best for last. I can’t wait to see what comes next.”

*‘And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.*



*And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy.*

*I will show wonders in heaven above  
And signs in the earth beneath:  
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.*

*The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

*And it shall come to pass  
That whoever calls on the name of the Lord  
Shall be saved.' Acts 2:17-21*

## **5. SO WHAT DO WE DO UNTIL THE HARVEST?**

*34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.  
35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you,  
lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who  
reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps  
may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent  
you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into  
their labors." John 4:34-38*

### **"Lift your eyes and Look at the Fields- It's Harvest Time !!!"**

"Have you felt the pull of the Lord to win souls recently. I distinctly feel we are moving into a time of prophetic fulfillment in our world today. It's time for the laborers to come into the fields. It's time for this next generation to step up and enter into this time of harvest. Don't say harvest is still somewhere in the future, the fields are ripe, today is the day. Today is your day!" FB

**ANSWERS: 1. LORD, LORD; 2. Relevant; 4. Outpouring**

# Extra, Extra.....

## ***The Mark of the Beast***

*“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:12-14*

The Bible talks about two different “marks” in the last days. We have all heard about the mark of the beast associated with the antichrist. This mark will probably deal with our ability to do business on earth during the dark time known as the Great Tribulation. Here is how the Fire Bible describes it:

“The antichrist will seek to gain total economic control of the world. All people are demanded to give their allegiance to him and cooperate with his system by receiving a mark on their hands or foreheads in order to buy or sell. This mark is Satan’s substitute for God’s seal on the 144,000. The type of “mark” the beast uses or how it is applied is not described except to say that it is “the number of his name”. It is clear, however, that once received, the mark is permanent, so that it identifies those who have rejected Christ and have turned their devotion to the antichrist. Economic pressure will probably be a tool used to persuade people to take the mark, which will also symbolize submission to the world government and the religion of the antichrist. Those who refuse to take the mark will be hunted down and killed.”

Then there is another more subtle mark that many have never heard of. It is actually the mark of the Spirit that separates believers from the rest of the world’s population in the last days. Here is a description of this mark in Wuest word book:

“The Holy Spirit is the guarantee until “the redemption of the purchased possession.” The words “purchased possession” -“*peripoiēsis*,” in the Greek “expresses the general idea of preserving, acquiring, gaining for one’s self, without specific reference to a price” (Expositors). It refers to the saints as God’s heritage which He preserves for Himself. The final redemption of this possession is glorification, when the physical body will be the recipient of the work of salvation. The soul and spirit are now the recipients of God’s saving grace. The body will experience that work at the Rapture when the first resurrection takes place. This will result to the praise of God’s glory.”

So I guess the ball is in your court. Which mark is on you? You may say “wait a minute, I haven’t taken a mark.” Maybe you haven’t physically taken a mark on your body but God’s mark is the only protection from what lies ahead. We must be marked or sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. Without His power in our lives the compromise will be too hard to avoid. There will only be two types of people in that day. Those marked by God or those carrying the mark of the beast.

**Week 8**  
***The Parable of the Wedding Feast***

*Read Matthew 22:1-14*

***Pastor's Corner***

*"When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."  
Colossians 3:14*

What is the motivating force behind all of our actions? What is it that causes us to crawl out of bed every morning and begin another day? For the businessman, it may be the pursuit of another deal. The athlete is in pursuit of a crown. For the mom, it may be the joy that comes from the maturing and advancement of her child. The addict rises looking for his drug of choice trying to make it through another day. The student hits the ground running, hoping for that elusive grade that holds promise for the future. What is it that causes you to press on for another day? Is it just the pursuit of natural provision or accomplishment? If you are disillusioned even when you are able to snatch your goals in life then keep reading, I have some good news for you. Today's scripture verse gives us a glimpse into this other motivating force, this other source and goal of life available to us in Christ.

There is a tangible life, the **RESURRECTION** power of Jesus Christ that can become the source of our life, our joy, and all our actions. This is not a philosophy of man or an old wife's tale. His power is tangible, available, and way more than any of us have ever imagined. It is the source behind world evangelism, the missionary serving in a strange land, the pastor in a sin hardened city, and the virgin keeping himself for his future spouse. Christ is our life.

Spurgeon writes, "Paul's marvelously rich expression indicates, that Christ is the source of our life. You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. That same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb raised us to newness of life. He is now the substance of our spiritual life. It is by His life that we live; He is in us, the hope of glory, the spring of our actions, the central thought which moves every other thought. Christ is the sustenance of our life."

So what drug you out of bed this morning? ...When we find Christ as our life, the pieces of our world begin to come together. We are no longer conflicted, having the different compartments of life; our work part, our family part, our religious part, and our fun part. Christ has become our life! He is our goal, our purpose, our message, our joy, our work, our rest, and our hope! We have found why we are alive, we have found our joy and we want to tell others about Him... So **Go Ye**, in your everyday lives and preach the Gospel, share the good news, cast out demons and lay hands on the sick and watch them recover... It's going to be a good day!!!

## 1. WHY DIDN'T THE PEOPLE INVITED AT FIRST TO THE WEDDING FEAST NOT COME?

*"4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"*  
*5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business." Matthew 22:4-5*

**It's not that they could not, but that they would not!!!** The Bible says they went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business etc.... Benson's commentary says, "they had other things in mind, in which they took more delight, and which they thought it more concerned them to mind..." It must be noted that one should be diligent in business; "but not so as to be thereby prevented from making religion their main business."

## 2. IN THIS PARABLE, WHO ARE THE SERVANTS?

We are the servants. What command is found to us in Mark 16:15? **15** *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."*

## 3. WHERE ARE WE TO GO TO COMPEL PEOPLE TO COME TO THE WEDDING FEAST?

*Matthew 22:9 says, "Therefore go into the \_\_\_\_\_, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding."*

**HIGHWAYS-** Greek **διεξοδους των οδων**, the *byways*, or *turnings of the road*: or the *ways most frequented*, or the places where several streets and roads meet. Benson's commentary notes, "Go and bid as many as you find, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, Jew and Gentile; tell them all they shall be welcome to gospel privileges upon Gospel terms, whoever will, let him come without exception..."

(The Gospel was rejected by the Jews. The apostles in obedience to Christ's command, went into all parts of the world, and preached it to every creature that was willing to hear it. They preached repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name among all nations, Mark 16:16, Luke 24:47. And the wedding was furnished with guests- Great multitudes were gathered into the Gospel church. Benson's Commentary)

## 4. WHY MUST THE GOSPEL BE PREACHED TO ALL THE WORLD?

*"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9*

## 5. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO RECEIVE TO BECOME HIS WITNESS?

*"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8*

You need to receive the Holy Spirit's power ("DUNAMIS") in your life to become a

\_\_\_\_\_ , to your family, your city, your nation and the world. This word “**DUNAMIS**” has two powerful meanings:

- First, the very nature of this word implies supernatural power. This is more than just human or physical power, this is the very power of God that flows from the person of the Holy Spirit.
- The second implication in “*dunamis*” is enabling. The Lord promised to give us divine enabling for the tasks we are called to.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is therefore a supernatural enabling to fulfill the purposes and calling of God. He gives us the divine ability and power to perform His will.

“There is power for us if we have the Holy Spirit. God wants us to speak to men so that they will feel it, so that they will never forget it. God means every Christian to be effective, to make a difference in the actual records and results of Christian work. God put each of us here to be a power. There is not one of us but is an essential wheel of the machinery and can accomplish all that God calls us to. There is not a thing that God expects of a person but that God will give him or her the power to do. There is not a command God gives to His children for which He does not provide the enablement for obedience. When Christ Jesus lived and died and sent down the Holy Spirit, He sent resources for all our needs, and there is no place for failure in the Christian life if we will take God’s resources. Jesus, the ascended One, and the Holy Spirit, the indwelling energy, life and efficiency of God are sufficient for all possible emergencies. Do you believe this? If you believe it, let Him into your heart, without reserve, and allow Him to control you and work through you today by His power.” A.B. Simpson

Augustine had a powerful saying that this verse brings to mind. “Lord, command what you will, but give what you command”. Augustine’s understood the futility of trying to fulfill the will of God with our human talents or will power. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to live a Christian life and lifestyle without supernatural power. Thank the Lord for the power of Pentecost today, we continue to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. He not only gives us direction for His purpose in our lives, He clothes us with power and ability to accomplish His purpose through the power of the Spirit. FB

## **6. IN THE LAST DAYS WHAT WILL THE LORD MAKE YOU?**

He wants to make you a **WITNESS**, a sign and a wonder to this generation. He wants to use your \_\_\_\_\_ to speak into people’s lives. He wants you to Pray, Preach and Prophecy to and for the lost. In these last days, if you have been Baptized in the Holy Spirit, He has anointed you to be a:

## PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING:

### ● PROPHEET

*“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.” Acts. 2:17-18*

When the Holy Spirit comes upon us in power, and divided tongues like as of fire sit upon your head,...The Word of God will become like a well of fire inside us that must come out. We will be like the two on the road to Emmaus that said “Did not our hearts burn with in us.” Like Jeremiah that said, “It’s like fire shut up in my bones.” *In Psalm 39:3 it says, “My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue:”*

As you meditate (muse) upon His word, **PROPHECY** will be like a river that will flow out of you, that will not only quench your thirst of things of this world, but it will also pour out of you to affect the world around you. We need to begin to speak the word and prophecy over the lifeless people in your lives. Prophecy to the dry bones... Prophecy, His word being spoken through you to another, should be a daily occurrence.

*4 “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: “Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.”” 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.” Ezekiel 37:4-7*

*“But he who prophesies speaks **EDIFICATION** and **EXHORTATION** and **COMFORT** to men.” 1 Corinthians 14:3*

### ● PRIEST

*“To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and **PRIESTS** to His God and Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Rev. 1:5-7*

The word Priest in Latin means to be a “\_\_\_\_\_”. We are called to help build a bridge for the lost to get to God. We are to be “Reconcilers and Restorers of the Breach.” We are to find the hurting and be like the Good Samaritan who did not pass by the man on side of the road, but stopped what he was doing and poured the **OIL** and the **WINE** and then carried him to a place where he could find care and help in his time of need. We do all that we can do, but we then must bring the broken to church where they can connect to the body of Christ, to be fed and nourished, so they can grow in Christ and they in turn can help someone else and become a priest.

- **KING**

*"Thou...hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God **KINGS** and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).*

In these last days He has anointed us to be **KINGS**, to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in this life as well as in the life to come. All authority has been given to us to cast out demons, to lay hands on the sick and pray the prayer of faith and watch as people are healed and set free. It says that Signs and Wonders will follow those who believe in the Last Days. It better because in the last days the enemy also will be performing signs, wonders and miracles. (See 2 Thess. 2:9) We better get serious about letting the Holy Spirit work through your lives. (Taken from Pastor Franks Sermon-Aug. 23, 2015)

## **7. WHO DOES HE TELL TO GO TELL?**

*"Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: **GO TELL...**" Matthew 28:10*

### ***TO AS MANY AS THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR...***

There are no qualifications to be a witness. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. His testimony working through your lives is not only a witness in itself but is an encouragement to others to follow Him. Daily as we are filled with Holy Spirit power (dunamis- power) we are enabled to do what we cannot do on our own. Opening our mouths and sharing our faith whether through prophecy, prayer, or just a simple word of faith etc. becomes a natural outflow of the Spirit of God within you. We are no longer encumbered by our past, but instead now we are empowered to **"Go tell"** that the Lord has done great things for us and we are glad and that He can do the same for them.

Our shame is gone, the past and its whispers are over... We must run now, in fact, don't stop running. **TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THIS LOVER OF YOUR SOUL, WHO DEFEATED DEATH AND THE GRAVE AND GIVES LIFE!** Preach it, tell it, write it, blog it, face-book it, text it, shout it-from twitter to emailing-we have all the tools, all the means to share this freedom Christ gives to us!!!

## **8. WHAT ARE WE TO PREACH UNTIL HE COMES AGAIN?**

*"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for them that believe". Romans 1:16*

Spurgeon says, "Let us but be bold for Jesus, and we shall see what His arm can do. The gospel is the voice of the eternal God, and has in it the same **POWER** ("dunamis") as that which brought the world out of nothing, and which shall raise the dead from their graves at the coming of the Son of Man. The gospel, the Word of God, can no more return to him void than can the snow go back to heaven, or the rain-drops climb again the path by which they descended from the clouds. Have faith in God's Word, faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost, faith in the reigning Savior, faith in the fulfillment of the everlasting purposes, and you will be full of confidence, and like an army with banners."

***ANSWERS: 3. Highways; 5. Witness; 6. Mouth, Bridge Builder, Rule and Reign***

**Week Nine**  
**When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?**

**Luke 18:1-8**

*“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ 6 Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”*

**Pastor’s Corner**

*“And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?” So he said to him (Cornelius), “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.” Acts 10:4*

If you really think about it, prayers have an eternal something about them because they are generated by God. Prayers are actually stored up. One of the stunning visions in the book of Revelation is found in chapter 8 where the angel hurls the censer full of prayers to the earth, this begins the season of justice aimed at man. This censor is full of the prayers of the church and it affects what happens during the last days of our planet. Your prayers are all stored up. Prayers for your kids, your parents, your neighbors, none of them are forgotten or wasted. They all last forever. In today’s verse the angel tells Cornelius that his prayers have come up as a memorial before God. What happened that day was somehow connected to those stored up prayers.

A. B. Simpson writes, “What a beautiful expression the angel used to Cornelius, Thy prayers are come up for a memorial. It would almost seem as if supplications of years had accumulated before the Throne, and at last the answer broke in blessings on the head of Cornelius, even as the accumulated evaporation of months bursts in floods of rain upon the parched ground. God is represented as treasuring the prayers of His saints in vials; they are described as sweet odors. They are placed like fragrant flowers in the chambers of the king and kept in constant remembrance before Him. Later they are said to be poured out upon the earth; and lo, there are voices, and thundering’s and great providential movements fulfilling God’s purposes for His kingdom. We are called “the Lord’s remembrances,” and are commanded to give Him no rest, day or night, but to crowd the heavens with our petitions. And in due time the answer will come with its accumulated blessings. Not a whisper of true prayer is ever lost. The longer it waits, the larger it becomes.”

What a powerful thought, all of your prayers have a lasting effect. Your forgotten prayers, your casual prayers, those desperate prayers; they are all stored up and are released as a memorial before God. In Cornelius’ case, it resulted in an incredible outpouring of the Spirit upon his family. He had obviously been praying for some kind of awakening for his family and friends. What have you been asking God for lately? All those prayers have been heard and apparently there is some kind of accumulated effect that results in answered prayer. So what do you think surprised Cornelius the most that day? Was it the angel that showed up in his house or maybe it was the effect of all those forgotten prayers. It seems his whole family was converted that day, maybe even the ones that seemed without hope.”



## 1. WHAT DOES THE PERSISTENT WIDOW IN LUKE 18:5, HAVE IN COMMON WITH CORNELIUS IN ACTS 10:4?

Both didn't give up!!! They both prayed, and prayed and prayed some more, until they received the answers to their prayers.

What does the Bible say about fervent prayers? James 5:16

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Fervent, consistent prayer, is one indication of faith in one's heart. Prayer is when you don't have answers to your current situation and you go to the Lord for an answer. The bible says, "*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see.*" Hebrews 11:1 (NET) Prayer and Faith in God is when we enter into agreement with God and His Word. In the last days the Bible says there will come a day when even God's elect (their faith) will be sorely tried. (see Matthew 24:22)

## 2. WHAT IS FAITH?

"Prayer, Worship and Praise is Faith Expressed!" Faith is an awakening of your soul, an awakening of your spiritual senses where God becomes real to you. In our country, in our region, in our personal lives we need a Great Awakening."

## 3. WHAT ARE THE TWO WAYS WE PRAY TO GOD?

*"14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."*

*1 Corinthians 14:14-15*

In our \_\_\_\_\_ language and in our \_\_\_\_\_ language.

## 4. WHAT PRAYERS GET ANSWERED?

*"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* Matthew 18:18-20

"The Lord spoke of what we call the prayer of agreement. He was not only talking about praying for something together, He was speaking of a spiritual bond or harmony that would bring tremendous results." Pastor Frank Bailey

## 5. WHAT DOES THE WORD AGREE MEAN?

**AGREE-**, *sumphoneo* (soom-foe-neh-oh); Strong's #4856: From *sum*, "together," and *phoneo*, "to sound." *Sumphoneo* is to sound together, be in accord, be in harmony. The word "symphony" comes from *sumphoneo*. Metaphorically, the word means to agree together in prayer that is concordant." Dick Mills

That is powerful, the word **“agree”** comes from the Greek word *symphoneo*. Obviously it is a musical term describing many musical instruments playing different parts harmonizing in one beautiful song. There is a place of agreement and harmony in the Spirit that produces unlimited results. This results consist in several things:

- **ANSWERED PRAYER-** “Harmony produces selfless, kingdom prayers that will surely come to pass.”
- **BONDAGES ARE BROKEN-**“There is power over all the works of the enemy in our harmonious prayer.”
- **CHRIST IS PRESENT** –This is the best result of all. That is what Pentecost was, 120 people in spiritual agreement, the results were the power of His presence and the heavenly song and lives forever transformed.

## **6. WHEN WE PRAY IN OUR HEAVENLY LANGUAGE CORPORATELY, WHAT DOES THIS PRODUCE?**

“When we come together and pray in the Spirit at the same time, it produces a most harmonious atmosphere. Jesus lives in that heavenly song. This song is holy, spontaneous, melodic, harmonious and filled with His presence. In this place \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ happen.”

## **7. WHAT ARE FOUR PRACTICAL KEYS TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER LIFE?**

- **BE PERSISTENT, DON’T GIVE UP**

*“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,” James 1:2*

We must stand on His Word and His promises even when we are facing the worst of circumstances. We must continue to seek God and PRAY *“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:3-4*

- **ASK FOR WISDOM**

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5*

*“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3*

- **DO NOT DOUBT**

*“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” James 1:6*

*“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...” Hebrews 12:2*

Consider Peter when he got out of the boat to walk on the water. When he kept looking up and kept his eyes on Jesus, he was able to do what he couldn't do on his own. But when he looked down, he began to sink.

- **PRAY IN THE SPIRIT**

*“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.....Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,” Jude vs 20-21; 24*

## **8. HOW DO WE END OUR PRAYER?**

### ***YOURS IS THE KINGDOM....***

*“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Matthew 6:13*

“\_\_\_\_\_ starts our time of prayer, and worship completes our prayer. I define worship as the act of enjoying God. Worship is spontaneous, it is our response to His greatness. Worship is not something we can do out of obligation but it is the pleasure of an individual that is aware of God's greatness. This explains the scene in heaven we see in the book of Revelation. In heaven, the angels, the seraphim, the elders, and the redeemed are all seen caught up in an ecstatic state of worship. In this world, we see through a glass darkly. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our lives gives us a foretaste of the atmosphere of heaven. In this atmosphere our vision is clarified. When we see Him we have no other course that can be taken, worship becomes the only response. It is our response to His greatness.” Pastor Frank Bailey

***“Praise is the work and happiness of heaven; and all that would go to heaven hereafter, must begin their heaven now.” Matthew Henry***

***ANSWERS: 1. See James 5:16; 3. Earthly, Heavenly 6. Signs, Miracles, Wonders;  
8. Worship***

## ***Week Ten***

### ***He is a Rewarder- 6 crowns***

***Hebrews 11:6***

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

***Revelation 22:12***

*“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.”*

#### ***Pastor’s Corner***

*“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.” Hebrews 6:10*

Humans have a short memory, “what have you done for me lately?” The Lord is not like us, He remembers everything. His record keeping is perfect. The only things He ever forgets are the sins that were held against us until Calvary. If you are a Christian, your entire past is nonexistent, nailed with Jesus Christ to the cross. When we stand before the Lord as a Christian, only our works since conversion will be reviewed, the rest is forgotten. This is where it gets interesting. He remembers everything. He remembers every tear (they are stored in a bottle in heaven), He remembers every prayer (they are in His incense bowl before the throne), He remembers every offering (they are being accumulated for our eternal reward).

Yep, He remembers everything. He remembers every soul we witnessed to, every act of kindness we performed, every time we preferred others in countless opportunities. I wonder if our lives would change much if we realized He was taking notice of everything that happens.

One amazing example of how observant He is is the story of the widow’s mite. It says in the scripture that He was standing in the temple treasury watching how people gave their offerings (by the way, He still does that today). He said that this woman, whose offering was less than a penny, had given more than the rich because she had given everything. His judgment system is quite different from what we are used to. He has a huge advantage, He looks at the heart and judges our thoughts and intentions, nothing escapes His notice. Matthew Henry had some interesting comments about this verse.

“Good works and labor proceeding from love to God are commendable; and what is done to any in the name of God shall not go unrewarded. What is done to the saints, as such, God takes as done to Himself. Those who expect a gracious reward for the labor of love must continue in it as long as they have ability and opportunity.”

The Lord gave me a word for someone in one of our services. Many years ago this sister had been very involved in ministry. Ministry was her life. She lived it and breathed it every day, until tragedy struck in her home. For years she has not been in the position to serve in the active ministry, she has been taking care of her family. The Lord gave me today’s scripture verse for her. ***“He said he would never be unjust to forget her labor of love that she has shown to the saints.”*** Yep, He remembers everything. You never know how life is going to change. If you have the privilege and the opportunity to serve the Lord in some ministry capacity, do it. Do it with your might. You don’t know how much time you have. When you stand before Him yourself, you won’t regret your work of love. After all, you will be glad He never forgets.

## 1. WILL THERE BE REWARDS IN THE NEXT LIFE FOR THE WAY I LIVED MY LIFE ON EARTH?

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work." Revelation 22:12*

*"But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!" 2 Chronicles 15:7*

*"The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." Ruth 2:12*

For those who live for Jesus and steadfastly long for His coming, \_\_\_\_\_ are promised.... If you earnestly prepare for Christ's appearing- obediently allowing God to work in you and through you- you will receive a glorious crown...! In a twinkling of an eye, in one instant you will be in eternity. Then what??? Most people think at death all the big events of their life are finished. Really they have just begun. Everything you do today matters forever. This truth will change the way you live your life. The Bible says, *"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven."* Luke 6:23 There is a direct connection to the things you do on earth and the something great He will do for you in heaven.

**"Our actions now will affect your future forever."**

## 2. WHAT IS THE JUDGMENT SEAT (BEMA) OF CHRIST?

*"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:10-12*

*9 "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:9-10*

The judgment seat of Christ (the **BEMA** seat of Christ) is the place where all Christians will stand to be judged. It is at this place where how you lived your life will be tested. Anything not done for the glory of God will be burned up in fire. The only thing that will have any everlasting value will be how you obeyed His Word and what you did for Christ alone. The judgment seat of Christ is not to determine salvation. Our sins have already been thrown into the sea of forgetfulness, as far as the east is to the west. This seat which we will stand before to face the Righteous Judge will be to determine our rewards.

Some things you might consider before you find yourself standing before the throne of God is:

- **How faithfully did you serve Christ? 1 Corn. 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5**
- **How well did I obey the Great Commission? See Matthew 28:18-20**
- **How victorious you were over sin? See Romans 6:1-4**

- **How well did you controlled your tongue? James 3:1-9; Matt. 12:36 says, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”**
- **What did you do with the resources that were placed in your hands? Did you invest them in the kingdom of God? See Matthew 6:19,20**

(Note: Non-Christians, people who in this life did not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, will not stand before this seat. They will find themselves only before the Great White Throne Judgment. The only thing that will matter for them on that day will not be what good things they did or didn't do, but only if their names are written in the book of life. If it isn't found, the Bible says they will be thrown into an everlasting lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. See Rev. 20:11-15)

### **3. HOW WILL OUR WORKS BE TESTED?**

#### **THEY WILL BE TESTED BY FIRE!**

*11 “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:11-15*

***“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:2-3***

### **4. WHAT WILL BE THE REWARDS THAT WILL BE GIVEN ON THAT DAY?**

#### **THE BIBLE SPEAKS ABOUT 6 CROWNS THAT WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE WORKS YOU DID UPON THIS EARTH.**

**Crown of \_\_\_\_\_**

*“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.” 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20*

**Crown of \_\_\_\_\_**

*6 “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous*

*Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:6-8*

**Crown of \_\_\_\_\_**

*12 “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12*

**Crown of \_\_\_\_\_ - (the Shepherds Crown)**

*2 “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” 1 Peter 5:2-4*

**\_\_\_\_\_ Crown**

*10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold , the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. 2:10*

**\_\_\_\_\_ Crown**

*“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” 1 Corinthians 9:25-27*

## **5. WHAT DID THE 24 ELDERS DO WHEN THEY RECEIVED THEIR CROWNS?**

*“The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne,…” Rev. 4:10*

We will be so overwhelmed by the rewards/crowns **because we know that He did those works through us not we ourselves.....** But He wants you to have those rewards eternally. So like a parent can't wait for Christmas morning to see their child's face open their presents, our Lord can't wait to give you His gifts and treasures. We may think we do not deserve any of it (and we would be right)... But I have a feeling He will stoop to pick up the crown and look into your eyes and say, it brings me great honor for you to sit at my table dressed in what I have given to you to enjoy. He is more excited to give you your rewards more than you will be to receive them. (KB) To enjoy Him and His rewards eternally will be the sound of Joy in heaven. In that day we will join with the 24 elders in singing:

***“You are worthy, O Lord,  
To receive glory and honor and power;  
For You created all things,  
And by Your will they exist and were created.” Revelation 4:11***

## 6. WHAT WILL BE THE GREATEST REWARD OF ALL?

**THE GREATEST REWARD OF ALL IS JESUS HIMSELF.....HE IS OUR EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD!!!** (See Gen. 15:1)

Some have focused on heaven as being our inheritance; you know, the gold streets, the foundation of precious stones, wealth beyond compare. All of those things are really lagniappe, heaven is heaven because He is there. Here is how Adam Clarke describes our inheritance:

“It is neither an earthly portion nor a heavenly portion; but GOD Himself, who is to be their portion. It is not heaven they are to inherit; it is GOD, who is infinitely greater and more glorious than heaven itself. With such powers has God created the soul of man, that nothing less than Himself can be a sufficient and satisfactory portion for the mind of this most astonishing creature. Joint heirs with Christ. Partaking of the same eternal glory with the glorified human nature of Christ.”

If you are born again you are far richer than you can imagine. We have inherited the Lord's name, His authority and His wealth. More than all of that, we have God Himself as our portion, it doesn't get much better than that.

You will be repaid for what you did on His behalf. No deed for God will pass by overlooked or unrewarded. Not one cup of water, or one prayer in the middle of the night.

*Without \_\_\_\_\_ it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a \_\_\_\_\_ of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6*

In Malachi 3 it says, a book of remembrance is being written and He will make us His jewels. In the New Testament it says He is coming quickly with His reward. He cares for you; He sees what you do... This should forever change how you spend your life, what you do in secret and openly... how you spend your time, money and use your abilities.

***“If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak.” C.S. Lewis***

***ANSWERS: 1. Eternal Rewards; 4. Joy, Righteousness, Life, Glory, Martyr's, Imperishable.***



## ***Week Eleven***

### ***Heaven a World of Love***

*“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”*

*Revelation 21:1-5*

#### ***Pastor’s Corner***

*“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.” Revelation 4:2-3*

Everyone says they want to go to heaven when they die but I am not so sure heaven is a place that the average person would really be interested in. Sure, no one wants to go to hell, but at the end of the day, what makes heaven, heaven. Surely it’s not the golden streets or the living forever part. There has to be more than just wealth and length of days. Actually, there is. Heaven is heaven because of love. This is not just any old human love. This is the supernatural kind. This is the love of God in our souls. God’s love for us will consume us and spill out of us toward Him and toward everyone else in that place called heaven. One of my favorite sermons is Jonathan Edwards **“Heaven is a World of Love”**. Here is a short excerpt from that message.

“Those places in which He (God) was said to dwell of old were all but types of this (heaven). Heaven is a part of the creation which God has built for this end, to be the place of His glorious presence. And it is His abode forever. Here He will dwell and gloriously manifest Himself to eternity. And this renders ***heaven a world of love***; for God is the fountain of love, as the sun is the fountain of light. And therefore the glorious presence of God in heaven fills heaven with love, as the sun placed in the midst of the hemisphere in a clear day fills the world with light. The Apostle tells us that, **“God is love”**, 1 John 4:8. And therefore seeing He is an infinite Being, it follows that He is an infinite fountain of love. Seeing He is an all-sufficient Being, it follows that He is a full and overflowing and an inexhaustible fountain of love. Seeing He is an unchangeable and eternal Being, He is an unchangeable and eternal source of love. There even in heaven dwells that God from whom every stream of holy love, yea, every drop that is or ever was proceeds.”

Heaven is a place that escapes all of our descriptions. I don’t think we have human words that can describe this place called heaven. God Himself will be so overwhelming that our experience of Him and His goodness will infiltrate and saturate everything else. Everyone there will be different because of the powerful impact the immediate presence of God will have upon all of our lives. We will love everyone in this heaven because we will see Christ in everyone there. There will be no aggravating people, no contentious people, no envious people, this really will be a different kind of place. Everyone there will be drinking from this fountain of love, the effects of this fountain changes everything.

## 1. WHAT THREE THINGS CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO IN HEAVEN?

- **THE JOY OF HEAVEN WILL \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11*

“There is no way for us to fully comprehend what heaven is really going to be like. C.S. Lewis made an incredible attempt at describing heaven in his book “The Great Divorce”. He painted a picture of a place of incredible substance or density with an extreme heightened awareness of our senses. David said it was a place with fullness of joy. What did he mean by fullness? Actually that describes something that is infinite because fullness of joy implies no boundaries. Heaven is a place of intense, extreme, overflowing joy that will increase throughout all eternity. There is no end to a “fullness of joy”. FB

- **THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN WILL CAUSE OUR DAYS OF MOURNING TO BE OVER AND WE SHALL BE \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory. “Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And the days of your mourning will be over.” Isaiah 60:19-20*

“I love the consistency of God’s Word. The different theophanies experienced over the years have profound differences but striking similarities. I think of the shining glory from the cloud in the tabernacle to the penetrating light Paul saw on the Damascus road. I am reminded of the shining apparel of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration and the glowing face of Steven as he preached at the synagogue in Jerusalem. Jesus spoke about being the Light of the world while John admonished us to walk in the light. Our God is light and His glory streams from His face throughout the universe He created. When we see Him in the new world, we will be like Him, changed by His light in a moment of time.”

John Gill writes, “The Shekinah, or glorious presence of God, which filled the temple of Solomon, and shone round about the shepherds at the incarnation of Christ; with the presence of God, who is light itself, which will be enjoyed in a much more glorious manner, will the church now be enlightened; and this will be an everlasting light unto her: and the Lamb is the light thereof; in whose light they will see the face of God, and see God face to face; they will see Christ as he is, and behold his glory; and look upon the angels, those glorious forms of light, and all the glorified saints, and know and converse with each other; and they will look into, and clearly discern all the mysteries and doctrines of grace, and all the various scenes of Providence, which will all be opened and laid before them. And this light will be always without any change and variation; which is no small part of the commendation of this city, which is the inheritance of the saints...”

- **THE JOY OF HEAVEN ITSELF IS THAT \_\_\_\_\_ WILL BE THERE.**

*“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.” Rev. 4:2-3*

“The Apostle John was doing his best to describe the indescribable. He was seeing the very radiance of the Glory of the Son of God, there is nothing in this creation that even comes close to His beauty. You see, the beauty of The Lord is more than just a physical beauty, it is the very goodness of His nature on display. His inward perfection is shining out in a brilliant display that John said was like an emerald rainbow. The Apostle Paul was also caught up into what he called the third heaven. He spent the rest of His life trying to find words to describe what he could only say was unspeakable. Have you ever wondered what really makes heaven, heaven? It has to be more than the golden streets. It is not just the eternal aspect of this incredible place. I don’t think its even the prospect of seeing our loved ones. No, what makes heaven, heaven is none of these things. These are only the shadows, **the substance of the Joy of heaven is Jesus Himself.** Without Him there would obviously not be any heaven.” Pastor Frank Bailey

“In heaven there shall be no interruptions from care or sin; no weeping shall dim our eyes; no earthly business shall distract our happy thoughts; we shall have nothing to hinder us from **gazing for ever on the Sun of Righteousness with unwearied eyes.** Oh, if it be so sweet to see him now and then, **how sweet to gaze on that blessed face for ever,** and never have a cloud rolling between, and never have to turn one’s eyes away to look on a world of weariness and woe! Blest day, when wilt thou dawn? Rise, O unsetting sun! The joys of sense may leave us as soon as they will, for this shall make glorious amends. If to die is but to enter into uninterrupted communion with Jesus, then death is indeed gain, and the black drop is swallowed up in a sea of victory.” Charles Spurgeon

## 2. WHAT DOES LOVE DESIRE?

***“WHOM IN HEAVEN DO I HAVE BUT YOU? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH THAT I DESIRE BESIDES YOU. MY FLESH AND MY HEART FAIL; BUT GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART AND MY PORTION FOREVER.”***  
***Psalm 73:25-26***

Jonathan Edwards writes, “Love desires \_\_\_\_\_. They shall therefore see this glorious God united to them, and see themselves united to Him. They shall see that He is their Father, and that they are His children. They shall see God gloriously present with them; God with them; and God in them; and they in God. Love desires the possession of its object. Therefore they shall see God, even their own God. When they behold this transcendent glory of God, they shall see Him as their own. When they shall see that glory, power, and wisdom of God, they shall see it as altogether engaged for them. When they shall see the beauty of God’s holiness, they shall see it as their own, for them to enjoy forever. When they see the boundless ocean of God’s goodness and grace, they shall see it to be all theirs.”

“These word of Edwards make absolutely no sense to the unsaved, there is no attraction to the Lord in the lost. To those who are experiencing spiritual stirrings in their soul, He becomes simply irresistible. Like Edwards says, **“love desires union.”** What do you love? The object of your affection is ultimately what you will be joined to in this life and the life to come.”

**“Oh, noble and pleasant employment to be  
forever gazing at our sweet Lord Jesus!”**

Is it not unspeakably delightful to view the Savior in all His offices, and to perceive Him matchless in each? To shift the kaleidoscope, as it were, and to find fresh combinations of peerless graces? In the manger and in eternity, on the cross and on His throne, in the garden and in His kingdom, among thieves or in the midst of cherubim, **He is everywhere altogether lovely.** Examine carefully every little act of His life, and every trait of His character, and He is as lovely in the minute as in the majestic. Judge Him as you will, you cannot censure; weigh Him as you please, and He will not be found wanting. Eternity shall not discover the shadow of a spot in our Beloved, but rather, as ages revolve, His hidden glories shall shine forth with yet more inconceivable splendor, and His unutterable loveliness shall more and more ravish all celestial minds.” Charles Spurgeon

***“A Place Called Heaven”***

*“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. 6 Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.....” 7 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”*

*12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*

***17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”***

***And let him who hears say, “Come!”***

***And let him who thirsts “Come!”***

***Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***

***I Am Coming Quickly...***

***20 He who testifies to these things says,***

***“Surely I am coming quickly.”Amen.***

***EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS!***

***Revelation 22:1-7;12-14;17;20***

***Answers: 1. Not End, Like Him, Jesus; 2. Union***

**Week Twelve**  
**But Until Then... WATCH!**

**Matthew 25:13**

*“WATCH therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”*

***Pastor's Corner***

The Prophets look for this day that we now live in. The Lord told Habakkuk that He would do an amazing work in his day that would utterly astound him and his people. When Habakkuk didn't understand all that the Lord was telling him about the future, here is what he said. ***“I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.” Habakkuk 2:1***

Habakkuk decided to get alone and wait for his mind to clear.... In waiting he waited....Sometimes His answer doesn't come on our schedule. Sometimes we need to retreat, and get alone with God to hear what He is saying... He will speak in His time. And so it is with the coming of our Lord. We do not know the day or the hour, but we know that He saves His best wine for last. We know even with all the turmoil in the world that revival is imminent and His return is sure. We like Habakkuk, must find our place on the wall and ***Watch*** as the Day approaches.

Matthew Henry says, “I will look up, will look around , will look within, and watch to see what He will say to me...Those that expect to hear from God, must withdraw from the world , and get above it, must raise their attention, fix their thought, study the scriptures, consult experiences and the experienced, continue instant in prayer, and thus set themselves upon the tower.... He will wait the time.... and he will have an answer.... He will know what God will say to him, not only for his own satisfaction, but to enable him as a prophet to give satisfaction to others....” David says, “ *I will direct my prayer unto Thee,*” as an arrow to the mark, he adds “*I will look up,*” will look after my prayer, as a man does after the arrow he has shot. Psalm 5:3

<sup>13</sup>*[What, what would have become of me] had I not believed that I would see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living! <sup>14</sup>Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord. Psalm 27:13-14 AMP*

## 1. WHAT DOES THE WORD WATCH MEAN?

According to Strong's concordance, two main Hebrew words are used for **watch** in the Old Testament. One is *mishmereth*, which implies the act of watching or the post itself. It is a duty, a charge, an office, a safeguard. *Mishmereth* is the feminine form of *mishmar*, which means "diligence, guard... watch." Both these words are derived from *shamar*, a primary root word indicating actions, such as to hedge about (as with thorns), to protect, attend, be circumspect, take heed, keep, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, save, lay wait for watch.

The Hebrew word for watchman is also revealing. It is *tsaphah*, meaning "to lean forward... to peer into the distance... to observe, await... behold, espy, look up... wait for, (keep the) watch. (Taken from Watch of the Lord- Mahesh & Bonnie Chavda).

## 2. WHICH INCIDENTS IN THE BIBLE DO WE SEE PEOPLE WATCHING?

Webster's dictionary defines the word watch as: the act of keeping awake to guard, protect or attend; (obsolete) the state of being wakeful; ... a state of alert and continuous attention. It is telling that in Webster's dictionary the definition of a watch as "the state of being wakeful" is termed obsolete. Good thing it wasn't obsolete in biblical times because, as we will see, watches yielded much fruit.

Consider The following list:

Jacob wrestled with "A Man" until dawn at Mahanaim- Genesis 32:24-28;

The Passover Watch- Exodus 12:42 NIV;

Rahab (she lived on the city wall, the place where watchman kept their charge)- Joshua 2-6;

Samuel- when the Lord spoke to him in the night, "speak to me Lord for your servant is listening."- I Sam 3:9;

David praying that his child would live, layed all night in prayer and fasting in the temple.- II Sam 12:16

Solomon- II Chronicles 1:7 after going to the temple and sacrificing 1000 burnt offerings- the scripture says- "On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, Ask! What shall I give you?";

Daniel in the lions den- Dan. 6:20;

Ruth watched all night at the feet of Boaz- Ruth 3;

Nehemiah watched before and during the time he supervised the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem- Neh. 4:6-14.

Even Gideon was instructed to choose the men who remained watchful, vigilant and alert, even when they were faced with a powerful physical need- quenching their thirst.

The watch in the Old Testament is a type of learning to rely on God and not on the arm of the flesh. That is still a foundational truth for the New Testament watch. We watch because we are fully aware that as Jesus said, *“He who abides in me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5). We need the intimacy, power and ability we receive as we spend time watching and praying with the Lord. (Watch of the Lord- Mahesh& Bonnie Chavda)

### **3. WHAT ARE SOME NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES?**

Jesus taught us how to watch and pray. His watching were more times of communing intimately with His Father. His times of watching were a source of life for Him, a relationship with Abba Father. And, of course, there He received the revelations and instructions He needed to fulfill His purposes on earth.

The anointing for miracles, signs and wonders always costs something. It's not just about lining up and having hands laid on for the impartation to move in the miraculous realm of the Spirit. There is a price to pay for anyone who wants that level of anointing. Part of the cost is to watch and pray. Then the power of God is released.

Consider Jesus' forty days in the wilderness , fasting and praying- Luke 4:1-2, in vs. 14 it say He returned in the power of the Spirit... He entered full ... He left in the power of the Spirit...

Jesus went to the mountaintop to pray in selecting His disciples see Luke 6:12-13- multitudes came to hear Him and in 6:17-19 it says... power went out from Him and healed them all.

Consider the Garden of Gethsemane- Luke 22:39 Before he went to the cross , He told the disciples who were looking for a sign simply “What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” Mark 13:37. Luke 21:36 reiterates, “Watch therefore, and pray always.”

Consider the widow Anna who “served God with fastings and prayers night and day” Luke 2:37.

The followers of Christ in the upper room waiting and watching. When Peter was in prison, the church was praying for him Acts 12:5, all during the night.

Paul and Silas praying at midnight and singing hymns to God... Acts 16:25... It was during the fourth watch of the night that Jesus walked on the water out to His disciples Mark. 6:48.

#### **4. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER HABAKKUK WATCHED AND WAITED AND HOW ARE WE TO LIVE OUR LIVES TODAY?**

*“Then the Lord replied...” Hab. 2:2 NIV....* When? After Habakkuk *waited*. After he determined to stand still and let God’s timing run its course. *Then* God answered.

Just as He answered Habakkuk He speaks to us today. He encourages us to write the vision and make it plain and to keep running. We must continue to Watch and pray, *O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. Habakkuk 3:2*

**WAKE UP!**- “Awake Awake, It is High time you awake out of your sleep for your salvation is nearer than when you first believed.” Rom. 13:11

**BE FOUND DOING THE WORK OF THE LORD-**“Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” Luke 12:43

**BE DILIGENT:** “...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, **4** saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?.... But the heavens and the earth... are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise... but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **(BUT UNTIL THEN) be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;** 2 Peter 3:1-14

**BE ALERT AND SELF CONTROLLED...PUT ON FAITH, HOPE, LOVE-** *1 “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9*

**BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE LORD’S WORK -** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. 15:51-55

**FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY-** "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." Colossians 4:17

**BE GENTLE-** “Let your gentleness be known to all men. *The Lord is at hand.*” Philippians 4:5

**BE A GIVER-**“**17** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. **18** Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, **19** storing up for themselves



a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

**APPRECIATE YOUR LEADERS-** **11** “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. **12** And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, **13** and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13

**FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD-** **14** Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. **15** See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

**16** Rejoice always,

**17** Pray without ceasing,

**18** In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**19** Do not quench the Spirit.

**20** Do not despise prophecies.

**21** Test all things; Hold fast what is good.

**22** Abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22

**DON'T WORRY, PRAY-** *“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” Luke 21:34-36*

**BE ENCOURAGED-** **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, **18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

**PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT A LOT!!!-20** *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life....**24** Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” Jude vs.20,21,24*

**TRUST IN GOD TO COMPLETE THE WORK-** **23** “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

**LOOK UP -** **28** Now when these things begin to happen, LOOK UP!!! and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” Luke 21:28